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Mr. *Edwards's*

SERMON

At the ORDINATION

Of the Reverend

Mr. *Job Strong*

June 28. 1749.

CHRIST the great EXAMPLE of Gospel Ministers.

A SERMON

Preach'd at *Portsmouth*,

At the ORDINATION of the Reverend

Mr. *Job Strong*,

To the Pastoral Office over the *South* Church in that Place,

June 28. 1749.

By *Jonathan Edwards*, A. M.

Pastor of the first Church in *Northampton*.

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BOSTON:

Printed and sold by *T. Fleet*, at the *Heart* and *Crown* in Cornhill, 1750.

A

SERMON

Chriſt the Example of Miniſters.

John XIII. 15, 16. *For I have given you an Example, that ye ſhould do as I have done to you. Verily verily, I ſay unto you, The Servant is not greater than his Lord, neither he that is ſent, greater than he that ſent him.*

WE have in this Context, an Account of one of the many very remarkable Things that paſs'd that Night wherein Chriſt was betrayed (which was on many Accounts the moſt remarkable Night that ever was) *viz.* Chriſt's waſhing his Diſciple's Feet; which Action, as it was exceeding wonderful in itſelf, ſo it manifeſtly was ſymbolical, and repreſented ſomething elſe far more important and more wonderful, even that greateſt and moſt wonderful of all Things that ever came to paſs, which was accompliſhed the next Day in his laſt Sufferings. There were three ſymbolical Repreſentations given of that great Event this Evening; one in the Paſſover, which Chriſt now partook of with his Diſciples; another in the Lord's Supper, which he inſtituted at this Time; and another in this remarkable Action of his waſhing his Diſciple's

ple's Feet. Waſhing the Feet of Gueſts was the Office of Servants, and one of their meaneſt Offices: And therefore was fitly choſen by our Saviour to repreſent that great Abaſement which he was to be the Subject of in the Form of a Servant, in becoming obedient unto Death, even that ignominious and accurſed Death of the Croſs, that he might cleanſe the Souls of his Diſciples from their Guilt and ſpiritual Pollution.

This ſpiritual waſhing and cleanſing of Believers was the End for which Chriſt ſo abaſed himſelf and gave himſelf for them. Tit. ii. 14. *Who gave himſelf for us, that he might redeem us from all Iniquity, and purify unto himſelf a peculiar People.* Eph. v. 25, 26. *Chriſt loved the Church, and gave himſelf for it, that he might ſanctify and cleanſe it with the waſhing of Water.*—That Chriſt's waſhing his Diſciple's Feet, ſignified this ſpiritual waſhing of the Soul, is manifeſt by Chriſt's own Words in the 8th verſe of the Context. Peter *ſaith unto him, Thou ſhalt never waſh my Feet. Jeſus anſwered him, If I waſh thee not, thou haſt no part with me.* Chriſt in being obedient unto Death, even the Death of the Croſs, not only did the part of a Servant unto God, but in ſome Reſpects alſo of a Servant unto us. And this is not the only Place where his ſo abaſing himſelf for our ſakes is compared to the doing of the part of a Servant to Gueſts. We have the like Repreſentation made in *Luke* xxii. 27. *For whether is greater, he that ſitteth at Meat, or he that ſerveth? Is not he that ſitteth at Meat? but I am among you as he that ſerveth.* And wherein Chriſt was among the Diſciples as he that did ſerve, is explain'd in *Matt.* xx. 28. namely, in *his giving his Life a Ranſom for them.*

When Chriſt had finiſhed waſhing his Diſciple's Feet, he ſolemnly requires their Attention to what he had done, and commands them to follow his Example therein. Verſe

12.——

12.——17. *So after he had waſhed their Feet, and had taken his Garments, and was ſet down again, he ſaid unto them, Know ye what I have done unto you? Ye call me Maſter and Lord, and ye ſay well, for ſo I am. If I then your Lord and Maſter, have waſhed your Feet, ye alſo ought to waſh one another's Feet: For I have given you an Example, that ye ſhould do as I have done to you. Verily, verily, I ſay unto you, the Servant is not greater than his Lord, neither he that is ſent, greater than he that ſent him. If ye know theſe Things, happy are ye if ye do them.*

When our Saviour calls on his Diſciples to imitate the Example he had given them in what he had done, we are to underſtand him, not meerly by the Example he gave in the emblematical Action, in waſhing his Diſciple's Feet, in it ſelf conſidered; but more eſpecially, of that much greater Act of his that was ſignified by it, in abaſing himſelf ſo low, and ſuffering ſo much, for the ſpiritual Cleanſing and Salvation of his People. This is what is chiefly inſiſted on as the great Example Chriſt has given us to follow: So it is once and again afterwards, in the Diſcourſe Chriſt had with his Diſciples, this ſame Night, *v.* 34. of the Chap. wherein is the Text; *A new Commandment I give unto you, that ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye alſo love one another.* Chap. xv. 12, 13. *This is my Commandment, that ye love one another, as I have loved you. Greater love hath no Man than this, that a Man lay down his Life for his Friends.* And ſo in 1 *John* iii. 16. *Hereby perceive we the love of God, becauſe he laid down his Life for us; and we ought to lay down our Lives for the Brethren.*

Chriſt in the Words of the Text, don't only intend to recommend this Example of his to the Diſciples as *Chriſtians*, or ſome of his profeſſing People, but eſpecially as his *Miniſters*. This is evident by thoſe Words he uſes

to

to enforce this Counſel, *Neither he that is ſent, is greater than he that ſent him.* In which Words he manifeſtly has reſpect to that great Errand on which he had *ſent* them, when he bid them *go and preach the Goſpel to the loſt Sheep of the Houſe of* Iſrael. *Mat.* x. 5, 6. and on which they were to be *ſent* after his Reſurrection, when he ſaid to them, *Go ye into all the World, and preach the Goſpel to every Creature.* The ſame Errand that Chriſt has reſpect to John xx. 21. *As my Father hath ſent me, even ſo ſend you.*

And what confirms this is, that Chriſt elſewhere recommends to Officers in his Church, that are in that reſpect chief among his Followers, the Example which he ſet in his abaſing himſelf to be as a Servant that miniſters to Gueſts at a Table, in his giving his Life for us; Matt. xx. 27, 28. *Whoſoever will be chief among you, let him be your Servant; Even as the Son of Man came not to be miniſtred unto, but to miniſter, and to give his Life a Ranſom for many.* Compare Luke xxii. 25, 26, 27, 28.

The Work and Buſineſs of Miniſters of the Goſpel is as it were that of Servants, to waſh and cleanſe the Souls of Men: For this is done by the preaching of the Word, which is their main Buſineſs, Eph. v. 26. *That he might ſanctifie and cleanſe it with the waſhing of Water by the Word.*

The Words of the Text thus conſidered, do undoubtedly lead us to this Concluſion, and teach us this Doctrine, *viz.*

That it is the Duty of Miniſters of the Goſpel, in the Work of their Miniſtry, to follow the Example of their great Lord and Maſter.

And this is what I would by Divine Aſſiſtance make the Subject of my preſent Diſcourſe.

And I propoſe to handle this Subject in the following Method. I.

I. I would obſerve wherein Miniſters of the Goſpel ought to follow the Example of Chriſt.

II. Give ſome Reaſons why they ſhould follow his Example.

III. I would endeavour to make a proper Application of thoſe Things to my ſelf, and others that are called to this Work of the Miniſtry.

IV. Shew what Improvement ſhould be made of them by the People of this Church and Congregation.

I. Then, I would ſhew wherein Miniſters of the Goſpel ought in the Work of their Miniſtry, to follow the Example of their great Lord and Maſter Jeſus Chriſt.

And here,

1. In general, Miniſters ſhould follow their Lord and Maſter in all thoſe excellent Virtues, and in that univerſal and eminent Holineſs of Life, which he ſet an Example of in his human Nature.

The Miniſters of Chriſt ſhould be Perſons of the ſame Spirit that their Lord was of: The ſame Spirit of Humility and Lowlineſs of Heart; for the Servant is not greater than his Lord. They ſhould be of the ſame Spirit of Heavenly-mindedneſs and Contempt of the Glory, Wealth and Pleaſures of this World: They ſhould be of the ſame Spirit of Devotion and fervent Love to God: They ſhould follow the Example of his Prayerfulneſs; of whom we read from Time to Time of his retiring from the World, away from the Noiſe and Applauſes of the Multitudes, into Mountains and ſolitary Places for ſecret Prayer, and holy Converſe with his Father; and once of his riſing up in the Morning a great while before Day,

and going and departing into a ſolitary Place to pray; *Mark* i. 35. and another Time, of his going out into a Mountain to pray, and continuing all Night in Prayer to God, *Luke* vi. 12. Miniſters ſhould follow Chriſt's Example, in his ſtrict, conſtant and inflexible Obſervance of the Commands which God had given him, touching what he ſhould do and what he ſhould ſay; he ſpake nothing of himſelf, but thoſe Things which the Father had commanded him, thoſe he ſpake, and always did thoſe Things that pleaſed him, and continued in thorow Obedience and the greateſt Trials, and through the greateſt Oppoſition that ever there was any Inſtance of. Miniſters ſhould be Perſons of the ſame quiet Lamb-like Spirit that Chriſt was of, the ſame Spirit of Submiſſion to God's Will, and Patience under Afflictions, and Meekneſs towards Men, of the ſame Calmneſs and Compoſure of Spirit under Reproaches and Sufferings from the malignity of evil Men, of the ſame Spirit of Forgiveneſs of Injuries; of the ſame Spirit of Charity, of fervent Love and extenſive Benevolence; the ſame Diſpoſition to pity the miſerable, to weep with thoſe that weep, to help Men under their Calamities of both Soul and Body, to hear and grant the Requeſts of the needy, and relieve the afflicted; the ſame Spirit of Condeſcenſion to the poor and mean, Tenderneſs and Gentleneſs towards the weak, and great and effectual Love to Enemies. They ſhould alſo be of the ſame Spirit of Zeal, Diligence and Self-denial for the Glory of God, and Advancement of his Kingdom, and for the Good of Mankind; for which Things ſake Chriſt went through the greateſt Labours, and endured the moſt extreme Sufferings.

2. More particularly ſhould Miniſtres of the Goſpel follow the Example of their great Maſter, in the Manner in which they ſeek the Salvation and Happineſs of the Souls

Souls of Men. They ſhould follow his Example of Love to Souls: Tho' it be impoſſible that they ſhould love them to ſo great a Degree, yet they ſhould have the ſame Spirit of Love to them, and Concern for their Salvation, according to their Capacity. Love to Men's Souls in Chriſt was far above any Regard he had to his temporal Intereſt, his Eaſe, his Honour, his Meat and Drink; and ſo it ſhould be with his Miniſters. They ſhould have the ſame Spirit of Compaſſion to Men under their ſpiritual Calamities and Miſeries, that he had of whom we read Mark vi. 34. *That when he came out and ſaw much People, he was moved with Compaſſion towards them, becauſe they were as Sheep not having a Shepherd; and he began to teach them many Things.* The Word tranſlated *moved with Compaſſion*, ſignifies, that he was moſt ſenſibly affected, and had his inmoſt Bowels moved with Pity. And again we read *Luke* xix. That when Chriſt was riding to *Jeruſalem*, that wicked City, but a few Days before his Crucifixion, and was come to the Deſcent of the *Mount of Olives*, where he had a fair View of the City, when he beheld it, he wept over it, on account of the Miſery and Ruin they had brought themſelves into Danger of by their Sin; altho' the Sin by which eſpecially they had made themſelves thus miſerable, was their vile Treatment of him; (for *Jeruſalem* was a City that had been peculiarly injurious to him) and tho' Chriſt knew how cruelly he ſhould be treated in that City before that Week was paſt, how he there ſhould be ſet at nought, and with great malignity bound, falſely accuſed and condemned, reviled, ſpit upon, ſcourged and crucified: Yet all don't prevent his moſt affectionate Tears of Compaſſion towards them. *When he was come near, he beheld the City, and wept over it, ſaying, If thou hadſt known, even thou,* (thou as wicked as thou art, and as vile as thou haſt been in thy Treat-

ment of me; even thou) *the Things which belong unto thy Peace! but now they are hid from thine Eyes.* (Compare *Matt.* xxiii. 37. and *Luke* xiii. 34.) One would have thought he would have been more concerned for himſelf than *Jeruſalem*, who had ſuch a dreadful Cup to drink, and was to ſuffer ſuch extreme Things by the Cruelty of *Jeruſalem* that Week. But he as it were forgets his own Sorrow and Death, and weeps over the Miſery of his cruel Enemies.

Miniſters ſhould imitate their great Maſter in his fervent Prayers for the good of the Souls of Men. We find it to be Chriſts Manner whenever he undertook any Thing of ſpecial Importance in the Work of his Miniſtry, firſt to retire and pour out his Soul in extraordinary Prayer to his Father. Thus when he was about to enter on a Journey, and go a Circuit throughout all *Galilee* to preach in their Synagogues, *he roſe up a great while before Day, and went out, and departed into a ſolitary Place, and there prayed.* Mark i. 35 — 39. And when he was about to chooſe his twelve Apoſtles, and ſend them out to preach the Goſpel, he firſt *went out into a Mountain to pray, and continued all Night in Prayer to God.* Luke vi. 12. *&c.* And the Night before his Crucifixion, wherein he offered up himſelf a Sacrifice for the Souls of Men, he pours out his Soul in extraordinary Prayer, for thoſe he was about to die for, as we have an Account in *John* xvii. That wonderful and moſt affecting Prayer of his, was not ſo much for himſelf as for his People. Altho' he knew what amazing Sufferings he was to undergo the next Day, yet he ſeems as it were to be unmindful of himſelf, and to have his Heart all taken up with Concern about his Diſciples; which he manifeſts in his ſpending ſo much Time in comforting and counſelling them, and praying for them with great Affection, Compaſſion,

paſſion, earneſt Care and fatherly Tenderneſs. And the Prayers that he made in the Garden of *Gethſemane*, under the amazing View of the Cup he was to drink the next Day, ſeem to be interceſſory; eſpecially the laſt of the three Prayers which he there made, *when being in an Agony, he prayed more earneſtly; and his Sweat was as it were great Drops of Blood falling down to the Ground*: When he did not pray that the Cup might paſs from him, as he had done before, but that *God's Will might be done.* (Compare *Luke* xxii. 44. with *Matt* xxvi. 42.) That Prayer, as the Apoſtle teaches us, *Heb.* v. 6, 7. was a Prayer that he put up as our High Prieſt; and therefore muſt be a Prayer of Interceſſion for us, a Prayer offered up with his Blood which he ſweat in his Agony; as Prayers were wont to be offered up with the Blood of the Sacrifices in the Temple. His Prayer at that Time, *Thy Will be done*, was not only an Expreſſion of Submiſſion, but had the Form of a Petition, as it is in the Lord's Prayer. He prayed that God's Will might be done in *his* being enabled *to do the Will of God*, perſevering in Obedience unto Death; and in the ſucceſs of his Sufferings; which might in an eminent Manner be called the Will of God, as it is in *Pſ.* xl. 7, 8. *Then ſaid I, Lo, I come;* —— *I delight to do thy Will, O my God.*

Miniſters ſhould follow the Example of Chriſt in his Diligence and Laborioufneſs in his Work. *He went about doing Good, and healing all that were oppreſſed of the Devil.* Act. x. 38. So abundant was he in Labours, that oftentimes he ſcarcely allowed himſelf Time to eat or drink; inſomuch that his Friends ſometimes went out to lay hold of him, ſaying, *He is beſide himſelf.* Mark iii. 20, 21. That three Years and an half of his publick Miniſtry was ſo fill'd with Action and Labour, that one of his Diſciples

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that conſtantly attended him, and was an Eye-witneſs of his Activity, tells us, that if *all that he did ſhould be written, the World would not contain the Books.*

Miniſters ſhould follow the Example of Chriſt, in his Readineſs not only to Labour, but ſuffer for the Salvation of Souls, to ſpend and be ſpent for them. In this Reſpect the Apoſtle *Paul* imitated his Lord and Maſter; Philip. ii. 17. *Yea, and if I be offered upon the Sacrifice and Service of your Faith, I joy and rejoyce with you all.* Col. i. 24. *Who now rejoyce in my Sufferings for you, and fill up that which is behind of the Afflictions of Chriſt in my Fleſh, for his Bodies ſake, which is the Church.* 2. Cor. xii. 15. *And I will very gladly ſpend and be ſpent for you.* Chriſt in his Prayers, Labours and Sufferings for the Souls of Men, is repreſented as travelling in Birth with them. Iſai. liii. 11. *He ſhall ſee of the Travel of his Soul.* In like manner ſhould Miniſters travel for the Converſion and Salvation of their Hearers. They ſhould imitate the Faithfulneſs of Chriſt in his Miniſtry, in ſpeaking whatſoever God had commanded him, and declaring the whole Counſel of God. They ſhould imitate him in the Manner of his preaching; who taught not as the Scribes, but with Authority, boldly, zealouſly and fervently; inſiſting chiefly on the moſt important Things in Religion, being much in warning Men of the Danger of Damnation, ſetting forth the greatneſs of the future Miſery of the Ungodly; inſiſting not only on the outward, but alſo the inward and ſpiritual Duties of Religion; being much in declaring the great Provocation and Danger of ſpiritual Pride, and a Self-righteous Diſpoſition; yet much inſiſting on the Neceſſity and Importance of inherent Holineſs, and the Practice of Piety. Behaving himſelf with admirable Wiſdom in all that he ſaid and did in his Miniſtry, amidſt the many Difficulties, Enemies and Temptations

tions he was ſurrounded with, wonderfully adapting his Diſcourſes to Perſons, Seaſons and Occaſions: Iſai. l. 4. *The Lord God hath given me the Tongue of the learned, that I ſhould know how to ſpeak a Word in Seaſon to him that is weary.*

Miniſters ſhould follow their Maſter in his Zeal, ſo wonderfully mixed and temper'd with Gentleneſs and Condeſcenſion in his dealing with Souls; preaching the Goſpel to the Poor, and taking a gracious Notice from Time to Time of little Children. And they ſhould imitate their Lord in his following the Work of the Miniſtry, not from mercenary Views, or for the ſake of worldly Advantages, but for God's Glory, and Men's Salvation; and in having his Heart engaged in his Work; it being his great Delight, and his Meat to do the Will of his Father, and finiſh his Work, *John* iv. 34. and having his Heart ſet on the Succeſs of his great Undertaking in the Salvation of Souls; this being the Joy that was ſet before him, for which he run his Race, endured the Croſs, and deſpiſed the Shame; his Delight in the Proſpect of the eternal Salvation of Souls, more than countervailing the Dread he had of his extreme Sufferings. Many Waters could not quench his Love, neither could the Floods drown it, for his Love was ſtronger than Death; yea than the mighty Pains and Torments of ſuch a Death.

II. I proceed now to the ſecond Thing propoſed in the handling this Subject, which was to give ſome *Reaſons* why Miniſters of the Goſpel ſhould follow the Example of their great Lord and Maſter Jeſus Chriſt.

1. They ſhould follow his Example, becauſe he is their Lord and Maſter. Chriſt as he is a divine Perſon, is the Lord of Heaven and Earth, and ſo one of infinite Dignity, to whom our ſupreme Reſpect and Adoration

ration is due; and on that Account he is infinitely worthy that we ſhould regard, not only his Precepts, but Example. The infinite Greatneſs and Honourableneſs of his Perſon recommends his Virtues, and a Conformity to them as our greateſt Dignity and Honour.

Chriſt is more eſpecially the Lord of Chriſtians; who are therefore under ſpecial Obligations to follow him. He is their Shepherd, and ſurely the Flock ſhould follow their Shepherd. He is the Captain of their Salvation; and it becomes Soldiers to follow their Captain and Leader. He is their Head; not only their Head of Rule and Authority, but their Head of Influence and Communication, their vital Head, and Chriſtians are Members of his Body: But Members, as partakers of the Life and Spirit of the Head, are conformed to the Head.

But Chriſt is ſtill in a more peculiar Manner the Lord and Maſter of Miniſters of the Goſpel, as they are not only Members of his Church, but the Officers of his Kingdom, and the dignified Servants of his Family. 'Tis the Manner of a People to imitate their Prince, but eſpecially the Miniſters of his Kingdom, and Officers of his Houſhold. 'Tis the Duty of the whole Army to follow their General, but eſpecially of thoſe Officers that have a Commiſſion under him.

2. Miniſters of the Goſpel are in ſome Reſpects called and devoted to the ſame Work and Buſineſs that Chriſt himſelf was appointed to. Miniſters are not Men's Mediators; for there is but one Mediator between God and Man, the Man Chriſt Jeſus: They are not our Prieſts to make Atonement and work out Righteouſneſs for us; for Chriſt by one offering has perfected forever them that are ſanctified: They are not Lords over God's Heritage; for one is their Maſter, even Chriſt. But yet Miniſters of the Goſpel, as Chriſt's Servants and Officers under him,

are

are appointed to promote the Deſigns of that great Work of Chriſt, the Work of Salvation. 'Tis the Work that Miniſters are devoted to; and therefore they are repreſented as *Co-workers with Chriſt.* 2 Cor. vi. 1. *We then, as workers together with him, beſeech you alſo that ye receive not the Grace of God in vain.* Chriſt is the Saviour of the Souls of Men; Miniſters alſo, are ſpoken of in Scripture as *ſaving Men's Souls.* 1 Tim. iv. 16. *In doing this, thou ſhalt both ſave thy ſelf and them that hear thee.* Rom. x. 14. *If by any Means I may provoke to Emulation them which are my Fleſh, and might ſave ſome of them.* 1 Cor. ix. 22. *That I might by all means ſave ſome.* And whereas 'tis ſaid Obad. 21. *Saviours ſhall come upon Mount Zion*; Miniſters of the Goſpel are ſuppoſed to be there intended.

The Work of Miniſters is in many Reſpects like the Work that Chriſt himſelf was appointed to, as the Saviour of Men; and eſpecially the ſame with the Work which Chriſt does in his Prophetical Office; only with this Difference, that Miniſters are to ſpeak and act wholly under Chriſt, as taught of him, as holding forth his Word, and by Light and Strength communicated from him. Chriſt himſelf after his Baptiſm, followed the Work of the Miniſtry: He was *a Miniſter of the true Sanctuary*, (Heb. viii. 2.) He ſpake and acted as his Father's Miniſter; was a Miniſter of the Goſpel, and as ſuch preached and adminiſtred Sacraments. Paſtors of Churches are Miniſters of the ſame Goſpel; but in their Miniſtry they act as the Miniſters of Chriſt. Jeſus Chriſt is the great *Biſhop of Souls*; Miniſters are alſo *Biſhops* under him. Chriſt came into the World *that he might be the Light of the World*; Miniſters are ſet to be Lights unto the Churches, and are alſo ſaid to be *the Light of the World.* Matt. v. 14. Chriſt is the *bright and Morning Star*; Miniſters are *Stars in Chriſt's Hand.* Chriſt is *the Meſſenger of the Covenant*;

Miniſters are called *Meſſengers of the Lord of Hoſts.* Chriſt is his People's *Shepherd, the good Shepherd, the great Shepherd of his Sheep.* Miniſters are alſo frequently called *Shepherds,* and are directed to feed the Flock of Chriſt, which he purchaſed with his own Blood.

Seeing therefore it is thus, that the Work that Miniſters are called and devoted to, is no other than the Work of Chriſt, or the Work that Chriſt does, certainly they ought to do his Work; which they don't do, unleſs they imitate him, and do as he does, or as he hath ſet 'em an Example.

3. The Example of Chriſt is moſt worthy of Miniſters Imitation. His Example was perfect, without Error, Blemiſh or Defect; and therefore worthy to be made our Rule, and to be regarded and followed without Exception, Limitation or Reſerve; unleſs in thoſe Things which he did that were proper to his peculiar Office. Chriſt's Virtue was not only perfect, but was exerciſed in thoſe Circumſtances, and under thoſe Trials, that render'd his virtuous Acts vaſtly the moſt amiable of any that ever appeared in any Creature whether Man or Angel. If we conſider the Perfection of the Virtue that Chriſt exerciſed, his Virtue did exceed that of the moſt eminent Saints, more than the pureſt Gold exceeds the meaneſt and fouleſt Oar: And if we conſider the Manner of its Exerciſe, and the Trials under which it was exerciſed, and the bleſſed Fruits it has brought forth, ſo his Virtue exceeds that of all other perfectly innocent Creatures, and even of the brighteſt Angel, as the Sun in its Glory exceeds the Stars.

And this Example was ſet us in our own Nature, and ſo is eſpecially fitted for our Imitation. There was in the Man Chriſt Jeſus, who was one of us, and dwelt among us, ſuch Exerciſes of Virtue as became our State and Circumſtances in the World, as thoſe who dwell in frail Fleſh and Blood, and as Members of humane Society, and dwellers

lers in ſuch a World of Sorrow and Death.

And then theſe amiable Exerciſes of Virtue in Chriſt, were exhibited chiefly in the Things which he did in that Work wherein Miniſters are called to act as Co-workers with him. The bright and glorious Example of Chriſt that is ſet before us, is chiefly in what he did during the three Years and half of his publick *Miniſtry*; and in the Devotion, Heavenly-mindedneſs, Humility, Patience, Meekneſs, Forgiveneſs, Self-denial and Charity, which he exerciſed in the Labours and Sufferings he went through for the good of the Souls of Men: And therefore is eſpecially ſet for the Imitation of thoſe who are ſet apart that they may make it the whole Buſineſs of their Lives to ſeek the ſame good of Souls.

4. Miniſters ſhould follow that Example of Chriſt which has been ſpoken of, becauſe if they are fit for Miniſters, and are ſuch as have any Right to take that Work upon themſelves, Chriſt has ſet them this Example in what he has *done for their Souls. I have given you an Example*, (ſays Chriſt in the Text) *that you ſhould do as I have done* TO YOU. Miniſters ſhould be animated in this Work by a great Love to the Souls of Men, and ſhould be ready to ſpend and be ſpent for them; for Chriſt *loved them*, and gave himſelf *for them*: He loved them with a Love ſtronger than Death. They ſhould have Compaſſion to Men under their ſpiritual Miſeries, as Chriſt had Pity on them. They ſhould be much in Prayer for the People of their Flock, conſidering how Chriſt prayed and agonized for them, in tears of Blood. They ſhould travel in Birth with the Souls that are committed to their Care, ſeeing their own Salvation is the Fruit of the Travel of Chriſt's Soul. They ſhould exerciſe a meek and condeſcending Spirit to the mean and weak and poor, and ſhould as it were waſh the Feet of Chriſt's Diſciples; conſidering how

Chriſt condeſcended to them, when they were wretched and miſerable and poor and blind and naked, and abaſed himſelf to waſh their Feet.

The chief Trials of Chriſt's Virtue, and ſo their moſt bright and eminent Exerciſes were in the Abaſement, Labour and Suffering, that he was the Subject of for our Salvation. Which certainly may well endear thoſe Virtues to us, and greatly engage us to imitate that Example: So the Things whereof this Example conſiſts, were Things by which we have infinite Benefit, without which we ſhould have been unſpeakably miſerable for ever and ever, and by virtue of which we have the glorious Priviledge of the Children of God, and have a full Title to the Crown of exceeding Glory, and Pleaſures for ever more, at God's right Hand.

III. I now proceed, as was propoſed, in the *third* Place, to apply what has been ſaid to my ſelf, and others that are employed in this ſacred Work of the Goſpel Miniſtry, and to ſuch as are about to undertake it, or are Candidates for it; and particularly to him that is now to be ſolemnly ſet apart to this Work in this Place.

We are thoſe to whom theſe Things eſpecially belong: We may hear Chriſt ſaying to us this Day, *I have given you an Example, that ye ſhould do as I have done.* For the Words of Chriſt in the Text were not only ſpoken to the twelve, but are alſo ſpoken unto us. We have now had repreſented to us, tho' in a very imperfect Manner, the Example that Chriſt has ſet, and what Reaſons there are that we, above all others, ſhould imitate it.

It is not only our great Duty, but will be our greateſt Honour to imitate Chriſt, and do the Work that he has done, and ſo act as Co-workers with him.

There are two kinds of Perſons that are given to Chriſt, and

and appointed and devoted of God to be his Servants, to be employed with Chriſt, and under him, in his great Work of the Salvation of the Souls of Men; and they are *Angels* and *Miniſters*. The Angels are all of them, even the moſt exalted of them, ſubjected of God the Father to our Redeemer, and given to him as his Servants, to be ſubſervient to the great Deſigns of his ſaving and glorifying his Elect; Heb. i. 14. *Are they not all miniſtring Spirits, ſent forth to miniſter for them who ſhall be Heirs of Salvation?* And doubtleſs, they were created for this very End; God made them for his Son, to be ſubſervient to him in this great Work; which ſeems to be the chief Deſign of all God's Works. And the Employment of Miniſters of the Goſpel in this Reſpect, is like that of the glorious Angels. The Principalities and Powers in heavenly Places, eſteem it not any Debaſement, but their great Honour, to be employed as Chriſt's Miniſters in this Work; for therein they are employed as the Miniſters of God, in the greateſt and moſt honourable of all God's Works; that Work of God wherein his Glory is chiefly diſplayed, and which his Heart was chiefly upon from Eternity. 'Tis the Honour of the Son of God himſelf, that he is appointed to this Work. It was becauſe God the Father infinitely loved his Son, and delighted to put Honour upon him, that he appointed him to be the Author of that glorious Work of the Salvation of Men. And when we conſider the Greatneſs, Importance and Excellency of it, we have Reaſon to be aſtoniſhed at the Condeſcenſion of God, that he would ever improve meer Creatures as Co-workers and Miniſters of Chriſt in this Affair; *for who is ſufficient for theſe Things?* 2 Cor. ii. 16. *Who is fit, or worthy? Who is equal to a Work of ſuch Dignity, and vaſt Importance?* Eſpecially have we Reaſon to wonder that God will employ not only holy and glori-

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ous Angels, but feeble, frail, ſinful Worms of the Duſt, in this Work, who need Redemption themſelves: And yet the Honour that is put upon faithful Miniſters, is in ſome Reſpects greater than that of the Angels: They ſeem to be that Kind of Servants that are the moſt dignified of the two. For Chriſt makes his Angels to be miniſtring Spirits unto them, unto the faithful Miniſters; and the Angels are their Angels: As faithful Miniſters of the Goſpel are not only Miniſters to the Church, but dignified Members of the Church, that Spouſe of the King of Glory, on whom the moſt glorious Angels, the higheſt Miniſters in the Court of Heaven, are appointed to attend. And then Chriſt ſeems eſpecially to delight to carry on his Work of the Salvation of Souls, through the Miniſtrations of Men, who have that Nature that Chriſt is united to, and that are of thoſe Sons of Men with whom he had his Delight before the World was made. So it is by the Miniſtration of Men, that the Scriptures are given; they were the Penmen of the holy Bible; and by them the Goſpel is preached to the World: By them Ordinances are adminiſtred, and thro' their Miniſtrations eſpecially Souls are converted. When Chriſt himſelf was employed in the Work of the Miniſtry in the Time of his Humiliation, but few comparatively were brought home to him, immediately by his Miniſtrations: It pleaſed Chriſt to reſerve this Honour for his Diſciples and Miniſters after his Aſcenſion, to whom he promiſed that they ſhould in this Reſpect do greater Works than he, *Joh.* xiv. 12. and accordingly it was by their preaching that the Gentile World was converted, and Satan's Kingdom overthrown. Thus God delights *to perfect Praiſe out of the Mouths of Babes and Sucklings, that he may ſtill the Enemy and the Avenger.*

It

It will be our great Honour that we are called to this Work of Chriſt, if therein we follow him; for therein we ſhall be like the Son of God: But if we are unfaithful in this Office, and don't imitate our Maſter, our Offence will be heinous in proportion to the Dignity of our Office, and our final and everlaſting Diſgrace and Ignominy proportionably great; and we who in Honour are exalted up to Heaven, ſhall be caſt down proportionably low in Hell.

Let us further conſider, that our following the Example of Chriſt in the Work of the Miniſtry, is the way to enjoy the ſenſible joyful Preſence of Chriſt with us. The Diſciples had the Comfort of Chriſt's Preſence and Converſation by following him, and going where he went. When we ceaſe to follow him, he will go from us, and we ſhall ſoon looſe Sight of him.

Our being conformed to Chriſt's Example, will alſo be the way for us to be conformed to him, and partake with him in his Priviledges: 'Tis the way for us to have his Joy fulfilled in us. Chriſt in doing the Work which the Father appointed him to, obtained a glorious Victory over his Enemies, and having ſpoiled Principalities and Powers, triumphed over them. If we imitate his Example, it will be the way for us in like Manner to conquer Principalities and Powers, yea, to be much more than Conquerors: It will be the way for us always to triumph in Chriſt Jeſus. It will be the way for us to obtain Succeſs in our Miniſtry, and actually to be made the happy Inſtruments of the Eternal Salvation of Souls. Chriſt has not only *told* us, but *ſhewn* us the Way to Succeſs in our Buſineſs, and the way to Victory over all that oppoſe us in it. And our imitating Chriſt in our Miniſtry, will be the way for us to be Partakers with him in his Glory; the way for us in like manner to be approved,

proved, and openly honoured and rewarded by God; the way to be brought to ſit with Chriſt on his Throne, as he is ſet down with the Father on his Throne. And as Chriſt is now exalted to ſhine as the bright Luminary and Glory of Heaven, ſo our following his Example, will be the way for us to be exalted to *ſhine* with him, *as the Stars forever and ever*. Dan. xii. 3. And as Chriſt in Heaven rejoices in his Succeſs, and will receive his Church, preſented to him without Spot, as his everlaſting Crown; ſo our imitating Chriſt in our Work, will be the way to partake with Chriſt in this Joy, and have the Souls, whoſe Salvation we are the Inſtruments of, to be our Crown of Rejoicing forever. Thus Chriſt and we ſhall rejoice together in that World of Glory and Joy where there is no more Labour or Sorrow. And we muſt enter into that Joy and Glory, in the way of following Chriſt in our Work; there is no other way for Miniſters to enter there.

And that we may thus follow Chriſt's Example, and be Partakers with him in his Glory, we had need to be much in Prayer for his Spirit. Chriſt himſelf, tho' the Eternal Son of God, obtained the Holy Spirit for himſelf in a way of Prayer, Luke iii. 21, 22. *Jeſus being baptized, and praying, the Heaven was opened, and the Holy Ghoſt deſcended like a Dove upon him.* If we have the Spirit of Chriſt dwelling in us, we ſhall have Chriſt himſelf thereby living in us, and then we ſhall undoubtedly live like him. If that Fountain of Light dwells richly in us, we ſhall ſhine like him, and ſo ſhall be burning and ſhining Lights.

That we may *be* and *behave* like Chriſt, we ſhould earneſtly ſeek much Acquaintance with him, and much Love to him, and be much in ſecret Converſe with him.

'Tis

'Tis natural, and as it were neceſſary for us to imitate thoſe whom we are much acquainted and converſant with, and have a ſtrong Affection for.

And in order to our imitating Chriſt in the Work of the Miniſtry, in any tolerable Degree, we had need not to have our Hearts overcharged, and Time filled up with worldly Affections, Cares and Purſuits. The Duties of a Miniſter that have been recommended, are abſolutely inconſiſtent with a Mind much taken up with worldly Profit, Glory, Amuſements and Entertainments.

And another Thing that is of very great Importance, in order to our doing the Work that Chriſt did, is, that we take heed that the Religion we promote, be that ſame Religion that Chriſt taught and promoted, and not any of its Counterfeits and deluſive Appearances, or any Thing ſubſtituted by the ſubtil Devices of Satan, or vain Imaginations of Men in Lieu of it. If we are zealous and very diligent to promote Religion, but don't take good Care to diſtinguiſh true from falſe Religion, we ſhall be in Danger of doing much more Hurt than Good, with all our Zeal and Activity.

IV. I come now to the fourth and laſt Thing at firſt propoſed, *viz.* to ſhow what Improvement ſhould be made of what has been ſaid, by the People of this Church and Congregation, who are now about ſolemnly to commit their Souls to the Charge of him whom they have choſen to be their Paſtor, and who is now about to be ſet apart to that Office.

And *you, my Brethren*, as all of you have immortal Souls to ſave, if you have conſidered the Things that have been ſpoken, can't but be ſenſible, that it not only greatly concerns your elect Paſtor to take heed how he behaves himſelf in his great Work, wherein he is to act as a Co-

worker with Chriſt for your Salvation; but that it infinitely concerns you how you receive him, and behave towards him. Seeing that it is for *your* eternal Salvation that he is appointed to watch and labour; and ſeeing his Buſineſs is to do the Work of Chriſt for you, 'tis natural and eaſy to infer, that your Reception and Entertainment of him ſhould in ſome Reſpect imitate the Church's Reception of Jeſus Chriſt. Gal. iv. 14. *My Temptation which was in my Fleſh, ye deſpiſed not, nor rejected; but received me as an Angel of God, even as Chriſt Jeſus.* Chriſt in the Text, commands thoſe whom he ſends, to follow his Example, and then in the 20 *v.* following, he directs thoſe to whom he ſends them, how to treat them. *Verily, verily, I ſay unto you, He that receiveth whomſoever I ſend, receiveth me; and he that receiveth me, receiveth him that ſent me.* Seeing the Work of your Miniſter is in ſome Reſpects the ſame with the Work of Chriſt, and he is to be appointed and devoted to do this Work for your Souls in particular, ſurely you ſhould eſteem him very highly in Love for his Work's ſake, and do all that is in your Power to help him, and put him under the beſt Advantages to imitate his great Maſter *in* this Work, to give himſelf wholly *to* his Work, as Chriſt did during the Time of his Miniſtry, and to be ſucceſsful *in* his Work. And as it was obſerved before, that it is impoſſible that Miniſters ſhould in any tolerable Degree imitate the Example of Chriſt in their Work, if their Minds are overcharged with worldly Cares and Concerns, you ought ſo to provide for him and ſupport him, that he ſhall have no need to entangle himſelf with theſe Things; otherwiſe you will not only bring a great Temptation upon him, which will vaſtly tend to hinder him in the Work of Chriſt among you, but will for the ſake of ſparing a little of your worldly Subſtance to your ſelves, fooliſhly

and

and miſerably ſtarve your own Souls, and the Souls of your Children, and will but cheat your ſelves; for you will not be in the way to proſper either in your ſpiritual or temporal Concerns. The way to have your Houſes filled with Plenty, is to *honour the Lord with your Subſtance, and with the firſt Fruits of all your Increaſe.* Prov. iii. 9.

And as it is your Duty and Intereſt well to ſupport your Miniſter, ſo it concerns you to pray earneſtly for him, and each one to do what in him lies in all Reſpects to encourage and help him, and ſtrengthen his Hands, by attending diligently to his Miniſtry, receiving the Truth in Love, treating him with the Honour due to a Meſſenger of Chriſt, carefully avoiding all Contention with him, and one with another. And take heed in particular, that you don't forſake him to follow thoſe, who under Pretence of extraordinary Purity, are doubtleſs doing the Devil's Work, in ſeparating themſelves, and endeavouring to draw off others from the Miniſters and Churches in the Land in general.

If you think I have ſpoken ſomething freely to you, I hope it will be conſidered, that this is probably the laſt Time you will ever hear me ſpeak from the Pulpit, and that I ſhall never ſee you again 'till we ſee one another in the inviſible eternal World, where theſe Things will open to us all in their juſt Importance.

And now nothing is left but to expreſs my ſincereſt Wiſhes and Prayers, that the God of all Grace would be with you, and your elect Paſtor, and that he would give you in him a great and long laſting Bleſſing, that you may enjoy much of the Preſence of Chriſt with you in him; that in him may be made up the great Loſs you ſuſtained by the Death of your former faithful and eminent Paſtor, whoſe Praiſe was in all the Churches; and

and that you may receive him as you ought to receive a faithful Minister of Jesus Christ, and may be a great Comfort to him, and may receive great spiritual and eternal Benefit by his Means; and that you may be each other's Crown of Rejoicing in the Day of the Lord Jesus.

FINIS.